



City of Huntington Beach

File #: 21-470

MEETING DATE: 6/10/2021

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBMITTED TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

SUBMITTED BY: Oliver Chi, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Oliver Chi, City Manager

Subject:

Determination of City Council Vacancy Appointment Process

Statement of Issue:

Former Mayor Pro Tem Jacob “Tito” Ortiz resigned his seat on the City Council effective June 1. Pursuant to Section 312 of the Huntington Beach Charter, vacancies are to be filled by an appointment of the City Council within 60 days. Further, the Charter stipulates that if the City Council fails to fill the vacancy within the specified timeframe, a special election must then be held to fill the vacant role.

Since the mid-1990s, the City has had to fill a vacancy on the City Council three separate times. After reviewing those past practices, staff would recommend adopting an appointment process that includes the following assessment components:

- Submittal of applications from interested individuals
- Introductory interviews for applicants to address the City Council
- Final deliberation and selection of the individual to fill the vacancy

If the City Council is unable to select an individual to fill the vacancy by July 31, 2021, the City will be required then to fill the seat through an election. Given that timeframe, the proposed assessment and appointment process timeline is suggested to be as follows:

- June 11 - June 25: Applications accepted from interested residents until 5 p.m. on June 25
- July 9 - 11 (exact dates TBD): Conduct interviews with applicants during a public meeting
- July 20: Appointment to the vacant seat would be considered at the July 20 meeting

Financial Impact:

There are minimal costs associated with coordinating the selection process as outlined above.

Recommended Action:

Finalize the City Council vacancy appointment process to include application submittals, introductory interviews, and final deliberation and selection by the City Council.

Alternative Action(s):

If the City Council vacancy is not filled by way of appointment, a special election would have to be coordinated at an estimated cost of approximately \$1.0 million.

Analysis:

In developing the recommended City Council vacancy appointment process, staff researched the appointment processes used by the City previously. An overview of those past appointment processes include the following:

- **Jim Silva**
 - Mr. Silva was elected in 1992 to serve a term through December 1996.
 - Mr. Silva resigned January 2, 1995, and Tom Harmon was appointed on January 23, 1995, to serve the remaining 1 year and 11 months left on the term.
 - The selection process involved accepting applications from interested individuals, City Council interviews with interested parties, and finalizing the selection of Tom Harmon at the January 23, 1995 meeting.
- **Dave Garofalo**
 - Mr. Garofalo was elected in 1998 to serve a term through December 2002.
 - Mr. Garofalo resigned December 26, 2001, and Grace Winchell was appointed on February 2, 2002, to serve the remaining 10 months left on the term.
 - The selection process involved accepting applications from interested individuals, City Council interviews with interested parties, and finalizing the selection of Grace Winchell at the February 2, 2002 meeting.
- **Pam Houchen**
 - Ms. Houchen was elected in 2000 to serve a term through December 2004.
 - Ms. Houchen resigned September 2, 2004, and Grace Winchell was appointed on November 1, 2004, to serve the remaining 1 month left on the term.
 - The selection process involved accepting applications from interested individuals, and finalizing the selection of Grace Winchell at the October 18, 2004 meeting.

Given our historical City Council vacancy appointment practices, it is recommended that the City Council direct staff to coordinate a process that includes the following components:

- June 11 - June 25: Applications accepted from interested residents until 5 p.m. on June 25

- July 9 - 11 (exact dates TBD): Conduct interviews with applicants during a public meeting
- July 20: Appointment to the vacant seat would be considered at the July 20 meeting

Regarding the application process, the pertinent information that would be requested from those interested in serving on the City Council are suggested to include the following:

- Applicant profile information including name, email, mailing address, and phone number
- Number of years applicant has resided in Huntington Beach and their occupation
- Current or past service on any City board or commission
- Description of applicant's qualifications, experience, and / or education, relative to the duties of serving on the City Council
- Information on any community activities that the applicant is involved with
- Description of applicant's goals in serving on the Huntington Beach City Council
- Outlining the vision that the applicant has for the City Council

Environmental Status:

Not applicable

Strategic Plan Goal:

Non Applicable - Administrative Item

Attachment(s):

None.